

## The Great Commission Part 1 - Matthew 28:16-20 - 2014-12-21

Call to Worship: Isaiah 66:23

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Sermon: "The Great Commission - Part 1" Matthew 28:16-20

Benediction: Hebrews 13:5b-6a

Hebrews 13:5b-6a He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU." (6) So we may boldly say: "THE LORD IS MY HELPER; I WILL NOT FEAR."

Matthew 28:16-20 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. (17) When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. (18) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

### INTRODUCTION

A break from Ephesians.

Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ to His church.

See that there are three basic things Christ's church is to do:

1. make disciples, then
2. baptize those disciples, then
3. teach those disciples

READ THE TEXT: Matthew 28:16-20

See that there are three basic things Christ's church is to do:

1. make disciples, then
2. baptize those disciples, then
3. teach those disciples

This morning we take the first one and look to understand it.

What does He mean when He says, "make disciples"?

Well, I always thought that . . .

Yes, what you always thought may well be wrong. So, let's find out: when the Lord Jesus commissioned His church to "make disciples," what did He mean for the church to do?

BODY

- I. From the Word Used in the Great Commission
  - A. Greek *matheteusate* to enroll someone as a student, as a pupil, as a learner
  - B. Make people into students
    1. presently a person is not a student
    2. the church is to make him into a student
  - C. The word student is correct, but doesn't go far enough
    1. the kind of student who is devoted to the teacher
    2. in a way it is more like an apprentice indentured to his master
    3. that's why we use the word "disciple" since this means someone who learns from a teacher, and is devoted to that teacher
  - D. Very important to the right understanding is this:
    1. It is not to train an apprentice, but to indenture someone to be an apprentice
      - a) there is the daily training of the apprentice to do the craft
      - b) but first there was the initial signing of the indenture that binds the apprentice and the master to each other
      - c) this word the Lord Jesus used is not the training, but the initial indenture
    2. It is not to teach a student, but to enroll someone as a student
      - a) there is the daily teaching of the student in class
      - b) but first there was the enrolling of the student in the class
      - c) this word the Lord Jesus used is not the teaching, but the enrollment
    3. It is not to teach a disciple, but to make someone start being a disciple
      - a) there is the ongoing work of teaching the disciple to observe all the command of Jesus Christ
      - b) but first there is the initial making of the person who is not a disciple to become a new disciple of Jesus Christ
      - c) this word the Lord Jesus used is not the teaching of the disciple, but the initial making him to be a disciple
    4. This is a BIG corruption in our present day Christian environment.
      - a) people talking about "discipling" someone or about "discipleship"
      - b) but they mean the ongoing process of teaching someone to walk with Christ
      - c) this is the third part of the commission, but they use the language of the first
  - E. **So, the commission is for the church to enroll people as students or indenture people as apprentices of Jesus Christ, to make them disciples of Jesus Christ**

- F. OBJ: We know we cannot do that.
  - 1. We don't have the power to make a sinner, a rebel against God, a prideful, unloving enemy of God, become a disciple of Jesus Christ.
  - 2. Therefore It must be that we are to do something, and when we do, the Holy Spirit works in power to make people become students, apprentices, disciples of Jesus Christ
  - 3. We still don't know what that is, but we are not at a dead end.
- II. From the Great Commission Given to Another Apostle
  - A. This is a helpful method for understanding the bible:
    - 1. you aren't sure you understand something in the bible
    - 2. go read where a different audience is addressed; often the same concept is given in a different way
  - B. read Acts 26:15-18
    - 1. open their eyes
    - 2. this will turn them
      - a) from darkness to light and
      - b) from the power of Satan to God
      - c) which means, this will make them repent
    - 3. having turned, having repented, they will then receive
      - a) forgiveness of sins
      - b) an inheritance
        - (1) among those who are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ
        - (2) oh, faith in Jesus Christ; we need to go back and add something to what we just said
    - 4. So, the commission is for the church to open people's eyes**
      - a) this will make them repent toward God
      - b) this will give them faith in Jesus Christ
  - C. OBJ: This doesn't seem to help us, because
    - 1. we don't have the power to do this either!
    - 2. again, it must be that we are to do something, and when we do, the Holy Spirit works in power to open people's eyes
    - 3. So, we still don't know what that is, but we are not at a dead end here, either.
- III. From the Great Commission Given in Other Terms
  - A. This is another helpful method for understanding the bible:
    - 1. you aren't sure you understand something in the bible
    - 2. go read where the same concept is expressed in different terms, different words, comparing scripture with scripture
      - a) the analogy of faith
      - b) the best interpreter of scripture is scripture
  - B. read Luke 24:46-47
    - 1. preach repentance and remission of sins
    - 2. specifically, preach this message:

- a) Jesus Christ has died for sins and risen from the dead, just as the scriptures said He would
    - b) now repent and your sins will be forgiven
  - C. NOTE: Okay, now we know what the church is supposed to do: **preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in the Name of Jesus Christ.** We can understand Jesus' words as this: "Go preach repentance and forgiveness of sins in the Name of Jesus Christ to to all nations."
- IV. From What the Church Actually Did in Obedience to the Great Commission
  - A. This is another helpful method for understanding the bible:
    - 1. you aren't sure you understand something in the commands of Jesus Christ
    - 2. go read what the apostles actually did in obedience to His commands
  - B. read Acts 2:36-42 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (37) Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (38) Then Peter said to them, "**Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;** and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (40) And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (41) **Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. (42) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**
  - C. read Acts 11:20-21 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, **preaching the Lord Jesus.** (21) And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number **believed and turned to the Lord.**
    - 1. the church preaches the Lord Jesus
    - 2. the hand of the Lord works powerfully
    - 3. people believe and repent
- V. Summary
  - A. What, then, do we understand the Lord Jesus to mean by saying to His church, "make disciples"?
  - B. We understand Him to mean, "Preach that Jesus Christ is crucified and risen again, and that sinners should turn from sin and believe in Him, and so receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life."
  - C. The main application of this to yourself today is simply to understand this.
    - 1. leave wrong understanding
    - 2. embrace right
  - D. There is much to be built on this basic understanding;
    - 1. refuse to understand it, and much else will not make sense

2. understand it, and much else will make lots of sense

VI. Application

- A. In Titus chapter 2, the apostle Paul tells each of us what his part is in fulfilling this commission to make disciples; it consists of this basic formula: behave yourself well in your daily life, so that you will 1) not make the gospel look bad, but will 2) make the gospel look good
1. Titus 2:9-10 workers who work for someone
    - a) obey
    - b) do not answer back
    - c) do not steal
    - d) show all good faithfulness
    - e) in doing these things you will adorn the gospel
  2. Titus 2:4-5 women who have a husband and children
    - a) love your husband
    - b) love your children
    - c) be discreet
    - d) be chaste
    - e) be homemakers
    - f) be good
    - g) be obedient to your own husband
    - h) in doing these things you will make those who speak against the gospel look foolish
  3. Titus 2:6 young men
    - a) be sober minded; be serious
  - 4.

Luke 24:46-47 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, (47) and that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations**, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 26:15-18 So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. (16) But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. (17) I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, (18) **to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.**'

JRY:

The One commissioning  
The ones being commissioned  
The reason for the commission

The reason  
The order  
The intent  
The promise

Do these things for a reason  
Do these things in this order  
Do what I mean by these things  
Do these things with confidence in Me

The order of the words  
    discipline  
    baptize  
    teach  
The meaning of the words

“make disciples”

NKJV, NIV, ESV the same

Greek *matheteusate*

Broadus:

- make disciples of, or more exactly, disciple
- we greatly need an English verb “disciple” for this passage
- quite distinct from “teach” but Latin unable to keep distinction, which failure was reproduced in early English translations
- “Teach” in all early English versions was a very imperfect translation, confounding this term with that in John 4:20, which really means “teach.”

JRY:

KJV “teaching” here is very unhelpful, at least now  
“enroll” the student, then “teach” the student  
enroll the student, then dress him in the uniform, then teach him  
sign up the player; dress him in the jersey, then teach him to play  
enlist the soldier, then dress him in his uniform, then teach him to be a soldier

Authority, therefore

go make disciples of all the nations [KJV “teach”]  
baptizing them in the name  
teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you

JRY:

you have the authority to go all over the world making disciples

Calvin:

The meaning amounts to this, that by proclaiming the gospel everywhere, they should bring all nations to the obedience of the faith, and next, that they should seal and ratify their doctrine by the sign of the gospel.

Trapp:

Greek “disciple them” Discipulate, make them Christians first, and then teach them to observe, as in baptism they have promised

Poole:

the Greek is *mayhteusate*, make disciples all nations; but that must be first by preaching and instructing them in the principles of the Christian faith

Henry:

Go into all nations, preach the gospel to them . . . and persuade them to come . . . into the church of Christ

Sam Waldron:

church-centered; it is the church’s great commission

who are the recipients? the 11 apostles

common to Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20, Acts 1

“you shall be my witnesses” means eye witnesses, as Acts 10:39-41

Acts 1:8 it is the apostles who receive this power

the apostles were not given this commission exclusively, but foundationally; therefore, through them to the church; to the church built on the foundation of the apostles

“make disciples”

pupil, learner, apprentice

Acts 14:21 made many disciples, they returned

we use the word ‘disciple’ and often we mean the third part of the commission;

that’s not the way the Lord Jesus used the word in the commission

baptize



“credible profession of faith”  
“I am with you always”  
all the originals are dead  
the “you” is plural, and refers to the church, or it doesn’t make any sense  
making disciples of the Trinity  
the Trinity is One; “the name” singular  
the Trinity has an order: Father, Son, Holy Spirit  
persons distinct  
applications  
relief - you don’t have to do it all by yourself  
rebuke - evangelistic individualism in rebellion against authority of the church  
responsibility  
-responsibility of every local church  
-responsibility of every local church member  
roles  
reliability - we can count on His promises

Mike Rehman:

He has authority; He authorizes the 11  
One-time event: baptize  
Ongoing: make disciples  
one compound word in the original

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Acts 2:36-42 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (37) Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (38) Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." (40) And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (41) Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. (42) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 14:1 Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.

Acts 14:7 And they were preaching the gospel there.

Acts 14:21-23 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, (22) strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." (23) So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 11:20-21 But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, **preaching the Lord Jesus**. (21) And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number **believed and turned to the Lord**.

Acts 11:25-26 Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. (26) And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year **they assembled with the church and taught a great many people**. And the **disciples** were first called Christians in Antioch.